



THE
NATIONAL PREACHER.

Vol. XL. No. 5]

MAY, 1866.

Whole No. 991

SERMON IX.

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THE GOSPEL AND ITS SUCCESSFUL PREACHER.*

"Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Rare and full of interest as this occasion is, my highest aspiration would be satisfied could I but develope and impress the leading thoughts in this text. *The gospel and its successful preacher* is its theme. Either branch of this theme would furnish matter ample and appropriate, but we prefer to follow Paul and bring them out together.

First, *the gospel* here defined in language so characteristic of this apostle as "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The wealth of India or California men can and do search out. The riches of the mightiest nations of earth, are inventoried and reported; but here in the gospel we have riches unsearchable—a treasure so

*This discourse was preached before the presbytery of Troy, at the installation of Rev A. B. Lambert, D. D., in Hoosick Falls, N. Y., Feb. 26, 1866. As it was furnished for the press in compliance with a vote of the presbytery, the local allusions are retained.

vast, no mathematical process can give even an approximate computation of its value. Strong as the language of our text is, it is no hyberbole, for it is not created material wealth it describes. It is the unsearchable riches of Christ; and yet material treasure is the figure employed here and often elsewhere in the Bible to impress the value of these "true riches." They are "gold tried in the fire," "A pearl of great price," "Durable riches," "Incorruptible treasure."

Why has inspiration employed this whole class of illustrations, but to impress the *value* of the gospel? This value we might well illustrate by pointing to its effects on individual character and associated humanity in the present life. Its purifying, refining, exalting influence on hearts and households—on communities and States. Its value is manifest by contrasting the condition of those most under its control with Pagans and Mohammedans, or even the devotees of a nominal but superstitious and perverted Christianity. We might read the value of the gospel in woman, lifted by its power from ignorance, and slavery to lust and toil, into social elevation and refined culture. We might read it in all the quiet happiness of the Christian household—in the confidence of business relationships—in the order and prosperity and liberal hospitality of Christian communities. It would be easy to show that the dissipation, and vice, and crime which revel in its absence, cost immeasurably more than the support of the gospel that holds them in check—that civil liberty always has and always must walk hand in hand with a free and pure gospel—that if our aspirations were confined to mere earthly enjoyments the gospel would be a priceless treasure. Passing these we take another class of illustrations. For what are material treasures prized? One source of their value is difficulty of attainment—the toil, the suffering, the peril involved in their acquisition. If diamonds and pearls were as plenty as pebbles we should doubtless admire them as we admire dew drops and flowers, but they would have no commercial value. If all our rocks were gold we might quarry it for walls, or bridges, or flagging for our streets; but it would lose all value as a standard of exchange. It is the difficult and perilous diving that makes the pearl so precious. It is the hard, self-denying, exhausting toil of the miner that makes gold a synonym for wealth. So with the Gospel. One measure of its value is found in the self-denial, the toil, the suffering it cost. God could speak worlds into existence with a word. "He speaks and it is done, he commands and they stand fast;" and he could doubtless annihilate them with a breath. The work of redemption was widely different. A broken law might indeed have been vindicated by a violation of almighty power consigning the transgressor at once and forever to the just penalties the law denounced. Thus was the integrity of

God's government vindicated in the doom of sinning angels; but to offer pardon to transgressors was quite another problem. "That God might be just" and yet "justify the ungodly"—that there might be "peace on earth and good will to man," and at the same time God be glorified "in the highest," this required humiliation—suffering—sacrifice. "Without the shedding of blood" sin could not be remitted. "It is blood" alone "that maketh an atonement for the soul." "Ye are bought with a price," redeemed, your ransomed paid, "not with silver and gold," nor "the blood of bulls and goats, but "with the precious blood of Christ." How lame and impotent are all illustrations in setting forth the difficulty and sacrifice with which these unsearchable riches were obtained. Ask the material heavens what agonies your redemption cost—they reply by covering their fair face with sackcloth. They could not look on the death pang of their Maker. Ask the earth—it answers with a fearful shudder. Measured by the difficulties and sufferings Infinite wisdom and love encountered in man's redemption, we wonder not that the apostle calls it "unsearchable riches."

Again, what is the value of material wealth when attained? What benefits can it confer? "Money answereth all things." As a means it can supply all material wants—gratify all animal appetites and inclinations. It can secure comfort and ease and the indulgence of taste. It commands the services of others and confers social position. The value men place upon it may be read in the eagerness of their struggles for its possession—the toil and care and peril to which they cheerfully submit in its pursuit. But for conferring real and enduring benefits, how does it compare with the gospel? Man as a sinner is "condemned already and the wrath of God abideth on him;"—a fearful condition surely. Put a felon on whom the court has pronounced sentence of death back into his cell only to await the day of execution—go offer him diamonds and pearls—thrust gold through the grates till the cold damp vault is full. Ah, this is not what he needs. There in the jail yard, busy hands are preparing his gallows. What to him is all the rich yellow ore or the sparkling gems? He is condemned, and each revolving sun is bringing nearer and nearer the day of his execution. Hear from his sinking heart the exclamations "If you have any pity keep your gold, but oh if possible obtain for me a pardon." First of all and above all a pardon is what he needs. Without that, mines of wealth are utterly valueless. With it he is content in the deepest poverty. This is the real condition of every sinner. The first, the most pressing of all human necessities is pardon. This is purchased by the unsearchable riches of Christ. Without this of what avail are much goods laid up for many years? Death hastens, and the judgment follows, and thenceforth without pardon the transgressor

is too poor to obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue. In this, first of all, is seen the value of the gospel, that it procures pardon—ransoms the condemned soul—redeems from death eternal. This pardon is itself an unspeakable treasure. In addition to this, the gospel confers ease, comfort, happiness for which gold is utterly powerless. "Let not your heart be troubled," says our sympathizing Saviour. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." "We that have believed do enter into rest." Why should I be anxious and perplexed with wearing toil and corroding care? Is not God my father, and does he not clothe the lilies, and feed a countless multitude of light winged sonsters that neither sow nor reap, and am I not of more value than they? Does not my father know what things I have need of, and are not his resources exhaustless? Conscience, too, that indestructible attribute of every intelligent soul, often upbraids and torments the most successful worldling, but faith in the blood of Christ extracts the sting from all its accusations. The deeper the consciousness of guilt, the sweeter the sense of pardon, and the more exultant the song of deliverance—the profounder the adoration of the riches of that grace that washes out stains so deep and dark—that confers life on the soul dead in trespasses and sins. This is the key-note of heaven's song as heard by John: "To him that hath washed us in his own blood," and the believing heart tastes on earth in its measure the same heaven-born joy. Added to the sweet sense of pardon—the rest of faith, and the exultant contemplation of the great love of God in the redemption purchased by Christ, the unsearchable value of the gospel is seen in the hope it inspires. No matter how tempestuous the storms that beat, this "hope is an anchor to the soul sure and steadfast and entereth into that within the veil." I need not dwell on the sustaining, cheering power of hope in afflictions and temptations, nor its victory over death and the grave. In just those scenes—at just those junctures in human experience when all earthly treasures are valueless, these unsearchable riches supply every want of the soul—even fill it with "peace that passeth understanding"—with "joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. So God has described it, and so every faithful soul will find it. There is not a true child of God on this footstool that would exchange his hope and joy in Christ for all the gold that was ever mined. I know that these unsearchable riches never will be appreciated in this world. We must go among the spirits of the just made perfect—do what no man can do, compute the number of the finally redeemed, and gauge and estimate that eternal weight of glory which is the heritage of each before we attempt to tell the value of the gospel. Till then we must take with childlike confidence the estimate God has given of it in the Bible. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor

the heart of man conceived it. It is "the unsearchable riches of Christ." We wonder not that Paul exulted in his mission. Had he been sent forth to scatter golden treasures from exhaustless coffers till all who would receive them, even as rich as a Rothschild, it would have been in comparison but a child's diversion. He dispensed a treasure of infinitely greater value as he went forth to "preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Secondly, what were some of the elements of Paul's success as a gospel preacher? These defined may instruct us; at least throw some light on our failures in preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The treasure is the same in our hands as in his. God hath committed this treasure to earthen vessels. This is itself a wonder; but he had good reasons, the first of which was, "that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of us." A sense of this—that the work is God's, not ours—an utter relying on his power I think takes the first rank among qualifications for preaching the gospel. It was the "grace given" of God that made Paul a successful preacher. He had genius very extraordinary, but he put no confidence in that for winning souls. He had eloquence—a blending of logic and impassioned fervor that in his writings constantly excites our admiration, but he utterly repudiates this as the ground of his success. He had culture—learning of a high order, and so may we have, the more the better, but this was nothing to the grace of God that was in him. Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, lies the real power of the gospel. No earnest believer in the bible will doubt that the first qualification for preaching immeasurably in advance of all others is a thorough and deep Christian experience. As Christ took part of flesh and blood that we might have an high priest able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, so God committed the gospel to regenerated men who could testify what they had felt and known, and not to angels who had no personal experience of its preciousness and power. Christ promised the Holy Spirit to be with his ambassadors to the end of the world, and assured them "He shall teach you all things and bring to mind whatsoever I have said unto you." No theological teaching is so thorough, so orthodox, or so effective as the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Most expressively the apostle calls this an "illumination." "God who caused the light to shine out of darkness," who said "Let there be light," and old chaos beamed throughout with illumination, "hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We appreciate Seminaries and Universities, but they afford no substitute for this experimental knowledge of the unsearchable riches of Christ wrought into the soul by the gracious agency of God's

Spirit. The influence of earnest humble piety is like the beams of the sun constant and pervading. Its illumination and warmth is felt in every ministerial function. It vitalizes the scattered seed, it nourishes the plants of righteousness, it matures the fruits of holiness. Deep spiritual experience we hold to be the first element of true ministerial qualification. Probably the most successful pastor living is Spurgeon. There are men in the ministry of more genius, more culture, and equal elocution, and yet who lack a tithe of 'his effectiveness in winning souls to Christ—a painful fact but easily explained. They enchain admiring crowds with splendid presentations of natural theology, or eulogies of social or commercial virtue, or profound discussions of civil rights and progressive humanity—just such discourses as the old pagans Plato and Aristotle might have preached. The earnest London pastor is always pouring from a full heart the marrow of gospel doctrine. I have unwavering confidence in the triumph of "the truth as it is in Jesus." If that triumph is deferred I shall feel most sadly that the immediate cause of the delay is a want of deeper spiritual experience in the hearts of those who assume the oppressive responsibility of ambassadors for Jesus Christ. If I am ever pained, and I sometimes am, in listening to a sermon, it is when the text contains or suggests some great truth about the soul's loss by sin, and recovery by infinite grace, but this truth is ignored, and I am treated to a fine moral essay, all true perhaps, but utterly innocent of any allusion to Christ crucified, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. As with the priest so with the people. Sickly piety grasps feebly and wields faintly that truth which is sharper than a two-edged sword, and the result is a weak effeminate Christianity that forms no effective bulwark against the rushing tide of worldliness that comes sweeping in, threatening to overwhelm the church which Christ hath purchased with his own blood.

I sympathize with that voice from the West which exclaims, "I don't know but the church is to become the patron of the opera, the theatre and the dance. I don't know but public balls will be opened with prayer, and the minister will lead off the figure, but I hope when that day comes I shall not be in this world." If it is right in any Christian man why not in a minister?

Next to earnest piety I would place among qualifications for the ministry, discretion—that happy combination of faculties which we denominate good sense, admirably illustrated by Paul in becoming all things to all men, though ready not only to be bound but to die in unyielding defence of principle. It was that which amid babbling and bloodthirsty Jews, or in the court of Cesar, surrounded by an Ephesian mob or an Athenian Areopagus, led him always to say and do exactly the right thing in the right time and place. Nothing is so difficult to manage as mind, and none

have such responsibilities in its training as ministers. If only the destiny of empires was in their hands, time might remedy their indiscretions or mistakes, but mind is immortal, and the impressions made on it abide forever. Preachers of the gospel "are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish." A savor of death unto death, or of life unto life. Do you wonder the apostle enquires so anxiously "who is sufficient for these things?" or that he so often and so earnestly commends himself to the prayers of all his fellow disciples. Of intellectual furnishing, my brethren who follow will doubtless speak more effectively than I could. One thing God demands of us all, and that is habits of study. He knew perfectly what incessant activities—what exhausting responsibilities would lie upon us, yet he insists that we give ourselves to reading and to thought, without these it is not possible to "feed the flock of God."

I close with a motive or two for the highest attainable qualifications for the work of the ministry.

It may be common for every age to magnify itself, but I have a deep conviction that no ministers were ever called upon to preach in such a time as this. What with electricity and steam and civil earthquakes, God is rolling on events with amazing velocity. He is bringing the nations every year into closer proximity, and augmenting the influence they exert on each other. We ourselves have seen the distance that separates the ends of the earth practically reduced many fold. Not alone in locomotion, but in the making of books and newspapers—in the manufacture of all fabrics—even in the production of food and clothing, an hour now does the work that required a day when this century opened. The highest and ruggedest mountain that reared itself across the pathway of truth on this continent was slavery. That has been plucked up and cast into the depth of the sea—buried from the sight of the nations forever. We can remember when three-fourths of the Pagan world was inaccessible to ministerial labor. How the valleys have been filled up and the rough places made plain.

God has spread the world out under the eye of his church, and bid her go up and take possession of her inheritance. Already her pickets are set, and her skirmishers are out in all quarters of the globe. What delays the final grand onward movement? I believe if every preacher had simply the piety, the self-abandoning devotion of Paul—all other qualifications being just what they are—and every church member had the consecration and faith of those who sold their possessions and laid the money at the apostles' feet, and when scattered "went everywhere preaching the Word, a generation would not pass before the world was substantially subjected to the truth." Have we, my

brethren, any valid excuse for having less faith and devotion than Paul and those primitive disciples? With such faith and devotion, how tender, earnest, and bold would be our ministrations. Whether in public or from house to house, what a savor of godliness would constantly pour from our full hearts. With what longsuffering and patience, in season and out of season, we should reprove, and rebuke, and exhort. Then how we should exult that to us was this grace given that we should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. We could have no greater joy than to see our children, whom we had begotten through the gospel, walking in the truth. How rapidly our opportunities for labor hasten to their close. Twenty-eight years have swept by since I first took part in an occasion like this. The pastor elect *then* is *now* the pastor elect of this congregation. Then a stranger to me, now for many years more than a fellow-laborer in the gospel of Christ—my friend—my counsellor—a brother dearly beloved. It is in my heart warmly to congratulate this congregation on the relationship now being consummated. I leave that to the brother whose special office it is to address them, while I admonish myself and my brethren that our remaining years of labor are passing, and what shall be our joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord? Will it not be meeting in his presence those brought into his fold by our labors and our prayers. Less, indeed, we may be than the least of all saints, yet if to us this grace is given that we should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and win souls to him, we may well rejoice in infirmity. We may welcome toil and self-denial, and even deep poverty, resting in the assurance that for us and all who believe through our word "there is a better and more enduring substance."

SERMON X.

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THE MAN TO WIN SOULS.*

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work."—2 TIMOTHY, ii: 21.

It need hardly be said, that the man who has been chosen by Christ to do his work, and who has been entrusted by the Holy Spirit with the ministry of the word to the souls of men, has been called to the greatest work, and to the greatest honor, that could be given to a man. So pure is this work of the ministry, and so high its aim, that its origin must be divine; and God alone can prepare one for this ministry, and make him a vessel unto honor, moulded and polished and cleansed, and fit to hold the pure water of life. I would endeavor to set forth:

I. The way by which the work of Christ in winning souls is accomplished in the divine institution of the Christian ministry.

II. The qualifications of the man divinely fitted to win souls.

I. It is clear that the Christian ministry was not instituted to do away or diminish the responsibility of other Christians in the work of Christ. The venerable and now sainted President Wayland said: "Every one is bound to undertake the conversion of the world to God. No one of Christ's people is under stronger obligations to be like the Master than another. All are equally bound to live and die for the object for which he lived, and died, and rose again, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father." This is undoubtedly true. Preaching Christ is a generic term, and implies all ways of publishing Christ's love and truth to men—by precept and example; by speech, spirit, and life; from the pulpit, and in the house; in every act, word, and look; by all possible modes of manifestation. All who are called Christians are called to this work of preaching Christ, of setting forth to their fellow men the way and life of the cross, and leavening the earth with a new spirit. In this very way the beautiful new heavens and new earth in

* Preached at the Installation of Rev. George Richards over the First Congregational Church in Bridgeport, Conn., Jan. 3d, 1866.

which dwelleth righteousness, will gradually rise from the darkness and death of the old corrupt state of things. All who are spiritual children of Jesus may hasten on the coming of this day of the Lord. This is the great work committed to them to do, and it should be the supreme end of every Christian's living. Yet this great, and sometimes greatly neglected truth does not militate against the truth that there are certain men who are specially set apart for this work of the Master, for this ministry of the Word to souls. These men are to give themselves *wholly* to the work of the ministry. They are to do nothing but this all their lives; and this seems to be the way God has designed to best accomplish the end of winning men to the knowledge and obedience of his Word, and thus to eternal life in his Son.

1. Nature itself teaches this truth, or, as it may be called, this divine institution of the ministry. There is an element in the human mind which serves as a foundation for religious institutions, and which unconsciously originates them. We may see the influence of this subjective law in human nature in the institution of the ministerial office; for what answers to the minister's office is found, since history began, among all nations. The workings of the religious principle in humanity, its yearning after the unknown and supernatural, and the internal want and perturbation which sin occasions, demand the existence of a class of men who shall be exclusive religious teachers; who, by the gravity of their lives, and their known piety and intelligence, are supposed to be capable of holding more intimate communion with God and the spiritual world, and of instructing the people in religion. "Where there is no vision the people perish." The ancient, blood-stained Druidic priesthood, the oracular priesthood of the refined Greeks, and the religious prophets and leaders of every heathen people and tribe on the earth now, are the false fruits of this instinctive law. And can it be doubted for a moment, that the Christian minister's office is the *true* response to this universal natural demand for religious instruction, sympathy, aid, for "shepherds of the people" who shall lead them into all the green fields of the truth and life of God? And if the minister be a true instrument of Christ, he does speak the word of God to men, just what they yearn for and are made for. He is taught of God to teach men.

If he do not teach them other teachers will. Men will have their religious instructors. In skeptical circles of the highest intelligence and most brilliant social culture, it will always be found that a few minds guide and control the rest. They are the oracles to whose responses there is no dissent. They are really the ministers of spiritual things—of religious untruth. Where there is not the true there will be the untrue. I have no fear that the levelling tendencies of the age will do away

with the Christian minister's office. It may level the mountains, but it cannot build railroads to heaven. All men recognize the divine office—the office of him who is consecrated to the work of studying God's word and teaching the way of life to men. It is founded on a principle of human nature. Herder has indeed thought, that possibly, in the future advancement and expansion of the kingdom of truth, the special work of the Christian minister might be rendered unnecessary. His idea was that the very brilliancy of the growing and greater general light would at last absorb him. But what reason have we to suppose that God will alter his whole spiritual economy of the world. While sinful men are to be brought to God, in uncivilized or civilized lands, in any spot, or under any circumstances, they will be saved, directly or indirectly, through the instrumentality of the preached Word. The truth, and the man to preach it, are God's way of converting the world. So long as men come into the world utterly ignorant, they will have to be taught of God, and spiritual things. While human nature remains unwrought, infirm, corrupt, it will need true modellers, counsellors, guides. Christ, who has a human heart, sends his word through the human heart. He draws men by the cord of a man. Books are not the preacher. Books may teach, but they cannot feel. They cannot enter into the wants, sins, sorrows, the indefinable desires and yearnings of the heart. The sinful soul must feel upon it the grasp of the living preacher, the spell of the authoritative voice of Christ's minister of truth and love. The world may be deluged with books, but they will not impregnate the world with the seeds of life.

2. Whatever is thus originated by nature is in fact of divine origin; but God has also chosen to put the stamp of a positive divine institution upon the ministry. After our Lord's brief human life on earth had ended, he was to develop the truth he came to establish in the world, through the free and affectionate agency of human instruments. He chose certain men from the multitudes attracted by his teachings—men of spiritual susceptibilities, but of the greatest variety of natural gifts—a little representative world-circle—to be the depositaries of the truth. He kept these constantly with him. He walked, ate, lived and prayed with them. He moulded them into his fit instrumentalities, breathing into them his spirit, and training them to his own simple but profound modes of teaching divine truth. With one exception, they became choice vessels, prepared for the Master's use and fitted for his work; they became Christlike. And let us ask here, if, in the light of history, it was a waste of power for Jesus to have made the apostles the instruments of publishing his truth to the world, of carrying out his great work, and of establishing his new kingdom of righteousness on

the earth? Do facts disprove the divine wisdom in this simple method of bringing back a lost world to purity and God? The instrumentality seems small, but has it not already proved its divine efficiency in regenerating the world? Have not the things that are weak, yea, and that are not, brought to nought things that are? How many mighty empires, not only in the physical but in the spiritual world of thought and philosophy, have already gone down before the silent power of Christian truth; and not only to Jew and Greek, to whom the apostles felt themselves debtors in the love of Christ, but to the whole world, the kingdom of God has come! Love is diffusive, and knows no bounds. Kindled in the hearts of twelve men, it has filled the earth, and the gross darkness that covered the nations is fleeing before its light, and the word of God, it may almost literally be said, is now preached to every creature.

The apostles' own work was soon over; but with the co-operation of the churches, and under the spiritual direction of Jesus, they ordained other men to preach the holy and joyful evangel of God to the world, and thus to transmit it purely to the end of time. All Christians were equally interested in this work, and equally responsible for it, but there was the special divine institution of the ministerial office to make known and apply the saving word of God to the souls of men, and to act as the focus and centre of the evangelizing efforts of the church.

It may be thought that I exalt too highly the office of the Christian ministry—that I make it, humanly speaking, the central instrumentality and hope of the world's conversion. I do indeed magnify the office; but it is a moral dignity, it is a spiritual glory which I claim for it, such as streams from the cross which it stands for and proclaims. A minister of Christ, as an ancient preacher said, is "the servant of servants." His prerogative is to suffer more, to do more, and to be himself more entirely 'hid' and 'lost' than other men, in the work of recovering a sinful world to the love of God; and if such ministers as Paul, Augustine, Luther, Chalmers, have filled the world with their names and glory, it was because the Maker gave them honor in their work, and made their faces shine like that of the meek prophet who came down from the mount, through their continual intercourse and communion with him who is alone glorious.

II. Having spoken of the way in which the work of Christ in winning souls, is accomplished in the divine institution of the Christian ministry, without at the same time diminishing the responsibility or taking from the honor of the individual Christian in the same blessed work, I would now speak of the essential qualifications of the man who is thus divinely fitted to win souls; and here is the stress, the main profound teaching of the passage of Scripture before us.

It cannot be doubted that under the old dispensation of the law, there was at times something like a mechanical impartation of power from God to a man to do his work, as we seize a brazen trumpet and sound with our living breath an inspiring call through its dead metallic tube; that the unrighteous Balaam, and the malevolent Caiaphas, were real agents for conveying the will and word of God to other souls; but in the new dispensation of love and grace, there is a different principle. It is not the official position, that forms fitness for Christian teaching, but it is the likeness to Christ.

"Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth would'st teach."

The apostle says elsewhere, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." In so far as I follow Christ, let me be your guide in spiritual things; the measure of my ability to teach and build you up in the truth of Christ, is the measure of my own spiritual likeness to him. This is the principle of the gospel in respect to the fitness of its ministers and instruments. The apostle was not a dead brazen trumpet for the breath of God to fill; but he was himself a living power, made so by the spirit of Christ inspiring him, and raising his human faculties in their contact with the infinite and divine. He was not a mere doctrinizer, a hod-and-mortar man to build up the temple of God; neither was he a mere exstatist in the mysteries of godliness, always prostrate on his face in the temple; but he was a man born of the Holy Spirit, and renewed in his own will and all his powers; who had been truly brought "to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." He had a sincerity which entered deep into Christ's spirit, and that, like the sincerity of his master, endured trial—"in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." His earnestness was one, in Luther's phrase, "from the bottom of the heart." The believing man was behind what he spoke. He spoke what he believed and was himself. Whenever this rare adjustment takes place of the man's own spirit and life to the spirit and truth of what he preaches, then, and not before, power is given him, and he becomes a vessel for the master's use fitted to win souls. And this admirable adjustment may not take place at once, nor until a man has been long in the ministry; for it is a great art to win souls, and Christ is sometimes a long time in shaping his instrument.

Should any of you desire to have his child taught the difficult art of music, would he send him for instruction to a man who hardly knew the first note of music? If he could do so, he would procure the services of a Mozart or a Mendelssohn,—of a man in

whom the spirit of music dwelled, and to whom God had given power to enter as a master into the depths of that intricate art,

"Untwisting all the strings that tie
The hidden soul of harmony."

And in the most delicate and consummate art of winning souls, of leading back proud, perverse, unbelieving, discordant, passion-tossed souls, into the sweet ways of peace and harmony with God's holy will, would you have the bungling teacher, the unshaped, unfit, unsanctified instrument? "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts." It is for this reason I believe that there has been sometimes a serious error and mistake as to the true proportional elements, or rather the right order and mingling of these, in what is thought to constitute fitness for the ministerial work. We have placed the spiritual ever first in form; but how often the intellectual first in reality. I know that since man's own humanity is not crushed out of him, and he is left a free agent even in this divine work, that the intellectual preparation is highly important; no one is more jealous of its importance. I would be the last to decry sound learning and theological science; or to lower one iota the noble intellectual standard which the American, and especially the New England ministry, has always held. I would make it higher still as the world advances in intellectual culture. As all truth is of God, and is one, I would have the minister of Christ stand as the representative of the one only divine truth, of "the light of the world," gathering into himself all the beams of knowledge and science, and sending them forth again with a purer refracted light on the world. But with an earnest desire to come at the secret of power in the ministry of Christ, whereby the primitive power of the ministry may be revived in the conversion of souls and of the world to God, I have been brought to think (it may be confessed almost against my own will) that the intellectual has been made too exclusive or supreme an aim with us. It may be that our churches themselves have been to blame in this matter by coming to regard the intellectual, or the human and outward qualification, however expressed, before the spiritual qualification of their religious teachers.

But let us remember, that a man may have the magnetic touch of eloquence; he may be master of a vigorous logic; he may have the sweeping wings of the imagination; he may have culture, scholarship, metaphysics; he may be able to walk along the high pathways of divine truth like an angel of light; yet in order to lead a little child of his flock to the Lamb of God, he

must be spiritually prepared, "sanctified and meet for the master's use." The true preparation for the work of winning souls, is almost purely a *spiritual* one, or so supereminently a spiritual one, that other qualifications are lost in comparison. Here we think is the great idea of the text, and of the New Testament, and of the true direction of reform in ministerial preparation—viz: that this is Christ's work; and he alone must and can fit a man for it.

I have left myself too little space to speak more specifically of these spiritual qualifications of the man divinely fitted to win souls. They might be all comprehended in this: that he be as near as possible like his master, whom he represents on earth; that he breathe his lofty and loving spirit. How heavenly is the pastoral work where there is the spirit of the true shepherd, of him who loves his sheep, and is loved by them; they follow him because they know his voice, among all voices; and he may lead them over the rugged and tremendous mountain paths amid cloud, and storm, and darkness, as well as through the green pastures and by the still waters! There is no office, no honor, no work, like this.

1. The man to win souls must have a true appreciation of that sin out of which souls are to be recovered, and some true inward experience of that holiness into which they are to be brought. The minister of Christ to wounded and diseased souls, must enter here into Christ's spirit in respect to his sense of the depth and guilt of sin; and also of the power and joy of a new-born holiness and life in God by faith. The Christian minister should be in this respect more than what is commonly understood by a converted man. He should be a sanctified and holy man. He should have felt his sin so profoundly as to have recoiled from it as far, and to have had by faith a real cleansing of his spirit. Yet how full of sin still! How constantly the impulse of a sinful will strives against the higher spirit! The old wounds will open and bleed, and the two laws will war in the members, irreconcilable, implacable, until the conflict is over in the grave. But there is nevertheless a true purification. "If a man therefore purge himself from these"—that is, from the iniquities of the unrighteous and unspiritual mind which had just been named, or more literally, from all companionship with evil men, and their thoughts and works, "he shall be a vessel unto honor." If this strong language cannot mean perfect holiness in this life, thorough and entire expurgation from sin, it does not look to a superficial cleansing of the heart. It signifies a real deliverance from the dominant and defiling power of sin—a purging of the mind from its inward darkness, ignorance, error, pride; from its secret love of power, pleasure, money, or the world in any subtle form, as well as from those sins that have a

more outward and terrible aspect; as George Herbert says, "*the greatest and hardest preparation is within.*" It is a mind that lays itself at the foot of the cross and cries, "cleanse *thou* me from secret faults!" I would not, O Lord, be paralyzed in my efforts to serve thee and to win souls, by the love of any evil thing whatever; but I would yield myself entirely unto thee my divine master, to shape and use me as thou wilt. It is this spirit of self-sacrifice which above all shows the spirit of Christ's true minister. I cannot here refrain from quoting the words of Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, England, in a letter to a friend: "Most sincerely I congratulate you on your prospect of a curacy, but much more on the approach of the highest earthly honor—the privilege of working for Christ,—and welcome you to a participation of its joys and sorrows. Perhaps the latter predominate here, but they are not worthy to be compared to the joys which shall be revealed in us, if we suffer with him. I think the strictness of self-examination for ministerial fitness is contained in that solemn, searching question of our Lord, thrice repeated, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' And if we can, from our inmost souls, say as Peter did, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' I believe the injunction which follows, and the warning of martyrdom, would be received with equal joy as our master's will. I am sensible that it is a test that makes me humble." It is this humble, penitent, self-emptying state, that makes a man receptive of higher power. Then God flows in by the influences of his mighty spirit and fills his soul with a divine potency. Then descends the tongue of flame upon him. Then there is indeed a pure and holy radiance, an awful yet tender and winning light from heaven about the man, that empowers him to become the humble instrument of leading wandering and lost souls to Christ. After Robert McCheyne's death, there was found an unopened note upon his desk from a stranger, who wrote that he had been converted in hearing the last sermon McCheyne preached; but, he added, it was not the sermon, but the holy something that was about the preacher proving his words to be true, that was the arrow of the spirit of God to his soul!

2. Closely following this personal victory over sin in Christ, I would mention, as another spiritual qualification for winning souls, an inwrought, inextinguishable, courageous and cheerful faith in the gospel, as the word of life to dead souls. John says of Christ, "In him was life." Again John says, "He that hath the Son hath life." So Paul spoke of Christ as he who had life in himself to impart to us—"Christ, who is our life." And in the epistle to the Romans (the love of which marks the masculine maturity of any preacher) this animating truth is developed in relation to our whole spiritual history. It is there shown

that "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the hinge upon which a dead world, and a dead soul, is lifted out of its eternal death into the eternal life of God. This is the Saviour's own explanation of his coming into the world: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And the laborer for Christ must drink into this same great spirit of confidence in the ever new power of the gospel to produce life. He must preach the gospel as a life-giving and hopeful gospel. It is the gospel of hope, not of sorrow—of hope to every soul. Love, light, life, these are the heavenly themes and forces of the gospel. And the preacher of this gospel must have a dauntless faith in the great truth that Christ has come into the world to give life to all men. There has been some controversy of late as to what constitutes "great sermons," or whether they should be striven after by the preacher of Christ. Yes, let him aim to preach such, but the great sermons which he preaches are those, and only those, which have this new life, and life-giving power, of the gospel in them. Every sermon should have this. It should spring from a divine, not a human source—from a thought of God, not a thought of man.

Would that we had more "great sermons" of this sort; in which, while the form and style is that which flows naturally from a well-educated and disciplined mind, and the material shows thorough and comprehensive study, yet the spirit and life spring fresh from the Word of God. For this cause it seems to me that more directly Biblical, rather than exclusively theological sermons, are preferable. The exegete is the original preacher. He is the inexhaustible preacher. He is always fresh and new. He is guided by the Spirit to his theme, and the Spirit speaks purely and directly through him. Above all, he has more of the gospel of life, more of Christ, the life, in his preaching.

3. I cannot dwell long upon the last, and perhaps most essential qualification of the man divinely fitted to win souls—the possession of the Christ-like spirit of sympathy. When a whole church, as it were, fell weeping upon the neck of the apostle as he was about to leave them, this was an affecting proof that he had drawn them to him by many a real and well-remembered act of love and sympathy, shown to them individually and personally, as he had gone around, day by day, to their houses, and had entered into their temporal as well as eternal cares, and had come close to them, and had laid his hands on the heads of the little children, and they all saw the tears run down his aged face as he told them of Christ, the crucified. Could they help loving him, who to the weak became weak, that he might gain

the weak ; who was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some ; and he did this for the gospel's sake, that they might be partakers with him of its blessedness ? Can any soul resist such unselfish sympathy ? How many a minister is an Apollos in the pulpit, who yet has no power to reach the heart of the young of his congregation ; because he has no real sympathy after all with the human heart ; because he is always dealing with the abstract or the metaphysical man ; because he has no such true love of men, of all ages and conditions, as to enter heartily into their life, hopes, desires, tastes, joys, sorrows, even their infirmities and sins. There is no real human sympathy about the man ; and men, especially the young, see it. But where such a genuine sympathy exists, and is joined to a fervent speech and a holy life, it is powerful beyond conception in working good to others. Let us know that there is something in every man upon which such love can fasten for his good, and perhaps for his eternal good and salvation. "Every man," says Tholuck, "has his own side from which the road to the heart lies, and by this he may be approached." What wounded spirit may not thus be approached by a love like "the gentleness of Christ?"

There is no moment of time more thickly sown with seeds of life or death, more full of eternal possibilities, than when one is brought in close personal contact with a *soul*, and one, above all, whom the Spirit has wounded. The still parlor, or the pastor's study, or the quiet walk in the fields, or even the corner of the crowded city thoroughfare, becomes the centre of attraction to at least two worlds. There may be strong reasoning, and wise persuasion, and solemn warning—there *must* be the clear truth, and faithful pointing out of the narrow way of life, to the balancing and hesitating soul. But even the truth should be presented with a feeling heart, one made fine by the love of Christ, one that has lost all its pride, formalism and bitterness, that is over-running with a Christ-like sympathy. One must truly love sinners before he can convert them. As one who is himself raised from the death of trespasses and sins by the blood of Jesus, he must talk to the dying soul of that dying and yet risen Redeemer, with words of faith, and feeling, and power. He will thus be the means of kindling in these dark, despairing souls the feeble, it may be, yet immortal hope of Christ. They will awake to his affectionate and earnest entreaties, and the Holy Spirit will use him as a powerful instrument to apply to their hearts the renovating word.

My friends, the brother for whose installation into the pastorate of your church we are met together this evening, may I not, with the privilege and frank sincerity of long friendship, commend to you, as one who possesses well-proven claims to the

honorable name of a Christian minister. Give him your love, for he deserves it, or will do so, by the blessing of God. Come up heartily and hopefully with him to the great work which you have in common; for, while modesty forbids me to speak of intellectual gifts, I may freely say that you will have in your spiritual leader, one whom Christ has richly trained in that peculiar wisdom and skill needed for the guidance of his church and for the winning of immortal souls.

Many years have flown since his right hand clasped mine in welcoming me to the joys and sorrows of the ministry. Many great, eventful changes have passed over us, and over our beloved land, now emerged from its gloom and struggle-years into this new year and this new era of universal freedom, hope and peace. These years have been terrific years, proving men's souls, testing their deepest principles, manhood, and very life. But they have been glorious years, if they have brought us, by the grace of God, out into the clearer light of spiritual freedom, and nearer the man Christ Jesus, our dear Master and Saviour. How strangely have the threads of our life been interwoven! In early youth they crossed and met, like threads of gold, in college walks, and joys and studies; in maturer years, in ministerial sympathies and labors, on the broad ocean, in the shadows of the mountains of the Old World, and now again, amid the busy, earnest, solemn scenes of the New. The Supreme Ruler, I believe, in this mysterious life-plan, guides our earthly friendships, and ordains them to bear no small measure of shaping influence upon our spiritual character and destiny. The disciple who brought his friend and brother to Jesus was the heaven-appointed, the fit instrumentality of eternal good to the soul of his friend, and of an unchangeable and ever-deepening friendship in the higher friendship and service of Jesus.

May he whom you have chosen to be your pastor be divinely wise to win these precious souls of his flock into the paths of righteousness, and life, and heaven!

SERMON XI.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY IN RESPECT TO THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE.

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."—DANIEL, i: 8.

When very young Daniel was taken as a Jewish captive into the court at Babylon. Being a promising youth, he was taken

into favor by the king, a suitable education was given him, and a portion of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank, were placed before him. He declined partaking of these things. Our text informs us, "he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with them." He considered it would be defiling to take a portion of the king's meat :

1. Because many of the beasts which were killed were unclean.

2. Because they had been strangled, or improperly blooded.

3. Because they had been first offered as victims to the gods.

He had three reasons why he believed it would be wrong to drink a portion of the king's wine :

1. It would do him no good, but harm.

2. Knowing the evils of drinking, he felt it to be his duty to discountenance the practice.

3. He was determined not to sin against his own conscience.

The example of Daniel in this total abstinence is excellent and praiseworthy. It is based upon scriptural principles, and should have not only our admiration but our imitation. It bespeaks conscientiousness of duty, rectitude of conduct, and firm decision and determination of character. Daniel knew the dangers to which he was exposed ; it was no time for him to halt between two opinions ; he must show himself a man ; he must practice the christian rule of self-denial. We are surrounded with the perils and dangers of strong drink. We see property wasted, human lives sacrificed, and immortal souls lost, because of intemperance.

As citizens and as Christians, shall we fold our arms and think we have not anything to do in stemming the tide and arresting the progress of this inundating flood. No, verily. We must be up and doing. We must erect our break-waters, raise our ramparts ; and come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

We will make a few remarks bearing upon this subject, as to what is the Christian rule of self-denial :

Christ, in laying down the terms of his discipleship, speaks explicitly. His language is, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."—Matt. xvi, 24. He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. He who enjoyed the glories of heaven took upon him our nature, and a life of sacrifice, privation and pain, that we might be saved and made happy through him. We are to follow him, imitate his example, and practice self-denial.

Sin is selfishness ; Christianity is pure, disinterested love. Love begets sympathy, moves to action, excites the feelings, and leads to self-denial. The principle of love, with all its attendant

graces, is enjoyed by the Christian. This principle leads to pious devotion, and influences the individual to deny himself that he may do good. Christianity teaches that every man is our neighbor, that Christ died for all, and that we are to deny ourselves, that we may be the means of saving our erring brother. Upon this principle there are many things which it may be lawful for us to do, but which are not expedient. It may be lawful for us to drink moderately of the intoxicating cup, but it is not expedient. It is injurious to our bodies; it is placing ourselves in the way of danger; it is setting improper examples; it is acting contrary to the christian rule of self-denial.

What says St. Paul upon this important subject? He says: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."—Romans, xiv, 21. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."—1 Cor. viii, 13. By these words he means that he was willing to deny himself for the sake of his stumbling brother.

Strong drink, ale, beer and wine cause thousands to offend and stumble by the way. We, in love for their souls, should set them examples of sobriety—touching not, tasting not, handling not, the unclean things.

In these *United States*, we have 40,000 intemperate, or confirmed drunkards; we have thousands upon thousands of moderate tipplers, who are in the way of drunkenness; and, because of strong drinks, we have an untold accumulation of sin, misery and death. Think for a moment, of the many low grogeries, and lager beer saloons which are daily open to the public, and which under the names of ale, beer, and whiskey, are dealing out starvation, destitution and death. Bring to mind the millions of dollars, which are wasted in the consumption of intoxicating liquors, and which might be usefully and beneficially employed. Truly we may say, because of drunkenness, the land mourneth. These evils depreciate from the wealth of our country, and help to bring her into disgrace. They greatly hinder the prosperity of God's cause; cause thousands to backslide on religion, and hurry immortal souls to the chamber of eternal death. *What saith the Scripture?* It says, "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that be ready to be slain. If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not, doth he that pondereth the heart consider it; and shall he render to every man according to his works?" Ps. xxiv. 11, 12. From these words, we conclude that, for neglect of duty, in not trying to reclaim the drunkard, and stem the torrent of intemperance, we are accountable to God, and shall have to give an account to him. We are

in duty bound, not only to refrain ourselves, but to use the means and exert our influence to persuade others to refrain also. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Perhaps, it is said, there is no need for us, from beer or wine, or strong drink, to totally abstain, we may drink moderately, without harm, without danger of intoxication. Allowing that we may, (which is doubtful) is it right? is it Scriptural? Because of intemperance, God's cause is suffering; human misery is on the increase; and millions of souls are in the way to eternal death.

Alcoholic drinks are not a necessity of life, but a superfluity. They are not beneficial to the body, but injurious to it. Man can live better without them than with them. Such being the fact, it is a scriptural duty we owe to our bodies, to our souls, and to society in general, to abstain from them. What, says the apostle Paul, "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own." 1 Cor. vi, 19.

Shall we take these temples, and defile them by drinking intoxicating drinks? Shall we make them vile and unholy? By so doing, we cannot present them living sacrifices to God, which is our reasonable service. We cannot be the Lord's disciples. Christianity requires self-sacrifice. Intemperance is everywhere disseminating disease, misery and death. To remove these evils, we are called upon to deny ourselves, and to make sacrifices of time, money and worldly ease. What did Christ sacrifice for us? Why, he sacrificed riches, honor, glory, and even life itself. We, to stem the torrent of drunkenness, must sacrifice time, money, and worldly ease. We must deny ourselves that we may do good. We must help the needy; befriend the poor; raise the fallen; and cheer the faint. We must show by our words, actions, and self-sacrificing spirit, that we sympathize with the inebriate, and are determined to do him good. Do we object to this? Do we haughtily exclaim, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Such a spirit is not the spirit of the gospel. It is not the childlike spirit of our beloved Christianity. It teaches the duty of self-denial of doing good, of living not for ourselves, but for him and unto him, who hath loved us, and given himself for us. To be Christlike, we must sacrifice the moderate-indulgence of intoxicating drinks. We must do this, that we may set good examples; be able with consistency to advocate the temperance cause, and show to the inebriate ones that we are in earnest. We must do this, or we shall fail in our important undertaking.

The Church is called upon to set her face against sin, sin in all its shapes and forms. She is to exert a moral, reformatory, and spiritual influence. She is a city set upon a hill, a light

in the world. Drunkenness is associated with darkness, and with the most flagrant acts of crime. It is one of the devil's strongholds. It is a fearful barrier to the spread of Christianity. It binds millions with its slavish chains, and keeps them in poverty and disgrace. These being the facts, it is our duty, both by precept and example, to discountenance the use of alcoholic drinks. Solomon bids us beware, even of the appearance. His language is, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. xxiii. 30, 31. Looking upon it, we are in the way of temptation, temptation leads to sin, and sin to death. The sure way of safety is to keep at a distance from, and not look upon the intoxicating cup. To avoid the danger of temptation of sin, Job made a "covenant with his eyes." Job xxxi. 1. And David prayed, saying, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. Ps. cxix. 37.

In this connection, we will say a few words respecting the genteel and modern custom of drinking in parlors. Domestic wines are placed upon the table, other drinks are introduced, and the company is invited to partake. For this custom, the plea is hospitality or kindness. Its advocates tell us it shows good feelings; it exhibits friendliness of disposition; it is a mark of sociability. Granting these things, do they counterbalance the evils, or justify the fashionable custom? Nature does not require, in the social circle, the use of stimulants. They are injurious to the body, enervating to the soul, and lead to temptation and sin. Many persons date the commencement of their intemperate career to the first taste of home-made, or domestic wines, at the social party. It may appear sociable and kind to present the social glass; but is it really so? We think not. It is presenting to our friends what is injurious, not beneficial. It is offering to them what will do them harm, not good. It is leading them into temptation, not from it. The custom is attended with danger; it is of doubtful expediency. It is not practising the Christian rule of self-denial.

The use of wines and alcoholic liquors as a beverage is directly forbidden in the word of God. The priests of the law were not to drink wine nor strong drink.—Lev. x. 9. The Nazarites and Rechabites, celebrated peoples among the Jews, from wine and strong drink were total abstainers. We are expressly commanded not to tempt our neighbor to drink. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. Can we drink alcoholic liquors, which are injurious to the body, hurtful to the soul, and pestilential to society, to the glory of God? We think not. Yes, but, say some, is not the moderate use of wine scripturally allowed? Have we not scrip-

tural examples of good men who sanctioned its use? Noah planted a vineyard, and drank of the wine thereof. Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, presented David and his friends with a bottle of wine. Our Saviour, at the marriage of Cana, in Galilee, turned water into wine. Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for the stomach's sake. In respect to the first-named example, Noah did drink of the wine, and, to his shame and disgrace, he was uncovered and drunken. The inspired historian mentions the fact, but he does not sanction the deed. In respect to the bottle of wine being given to David and his friends, it was given to them under peculiar circumstances. They were fleeing from their enemies; they were fatigued and weary. It was given not as a beverage, but as medicine; "it was for such as be faint in the wilderness."—2 Sam. xvi. 2; it was for those who are ready to perish. Our Saviour did turn water into wine, but we do not believe the wine was of an intoxicating nature. He whose life was pure and holy did not encourage intoxication. Paul said to Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."—1 Tim. v. 23. Paul recommended wine as a medicine, and then only for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities. The Scriptures allow what is beneficial to the body, but discountenance what is injurious thereto. They teach the duties of sobriety, brotherly love and christian self-denial.

And now, friends, what think you of the evils of intemperance, of the teachings of Scripture upon the subject, and upon the rule of christian self-denial? Intemperance is blighting the prospects of our nation, fearfully increasing our annual taxation, and causing great misery, sin and death. It is filling our State prisons with unhappy victims, increasing the amount of human suffering, arresting the progress of Christianity, and hurrying millions of souls to the chambers of eternal death. Knowing the fearful evils produced by intemperance, can we, dare we, be silent? It is our duty to cry aloud, and spare not, to lift up our voices like trumpets, and warn the people of their danger. As Christians, it is our duty to warn every man, and to use all proper means to save our stumbling brother.

We wish the temperance cause to prosper; we pray that intemperance may be banished from our land. To accomplish this desirable result we must show by our words and actions that we are on the temperance side. We must, in this particular, come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.